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Subject Announcing the Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition

## NEWS RELEASE



**Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition**  
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### **KALAMAZOO RIVER CLEANUP COALITION FORMED TO ADDRESS PCB REMOVAL AND DISPOSAL EFFORT**

#### **Group Seeks “Regional Solution to Regional Problem” of PCBs**

#### **Allied Site and Downstream Impoundments Are Among “Hotspots” Targeted as Priorities**

KALAMAZOO, Mich. [June 26, 2007]: The grassroots coalition that blocked the dumping of PCB-laden river sediment in Kalamazoo has formally organized as the Kalamazoo River Cleanup Coalition (KRCC).

A group of initial incorporators has elected a board of directors and filed articles of incorporation with the State of Michigan to establish KRCC as a nonprofit corporation. The group will also apply to the United States Internal Revenue Service to receive tax-exempt 501(c)(3) status.

As stated in its articles of incorporation, KRCC is organized “to educate the public and work with all stakeholders to develop and implement a collaborative, regional strategy to clean up pollution and promote redevelopment of blighted areas of the entire Allied Paper Inc./Portage Creek/Kalamazoo River Superfund area of concern.”

According to newly elected KRCC President Gary Wager, KRCC will focus solely on the issue of PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls) within the Kalamazoo River Superfund site, a more than 80-mile stretch of river from Kalamazoo, where most of the PCB contamination originated, to Saugatuck, where the Kalamazoo River enters Lake Michigan.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control has stated that PCBs are a proven cause of reproductive and neurological disorders in humans and animals, and a suspected cause of cancer.

“PCBs are a major health problem for all citizens and wildlife along the River. Our goal is to help negotiate a regional solution to what is clearly a regional problem of properly removing and disposing of PCB-laden material from the River.”

Wager said key stakeholders in the effort include all who live, work and play along the Kalamazoo River and should benefit from its restoration. “We intend to harness the political will and grassroots advocacy that was generated this spring and keep it going to find a practical long-term solution to the PCB problem.”

KRCC will also engage in talks with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ), other federal and state agencies, and two companies—

Millennium Holdings and Georgia-Pacific—that are identified as the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) in the Superfund cleanup process.

The former Allied Paper site and a three-mile stretch of the Portage Creek in Kalamazoo are included in the Superfund site. These, along with a series of dams and impoundments in Allegan County and other PCB “hotspots” along the River, will be focal points of the KRCC effort.

According to KRCC board member Jason Novotny, the best chance at a successful restoration of any one site along the Kalamazoo River will come about through a collaborative, regional strategy that includes constructive, open dialog with the EPA, MDEQ, PRPs and other key stakeholders in the public arena.

“Any satisfactory resolution and cleanup at the Allied site, the dams, impoundments and other PCB-contaminated sites must occur in the context of a ‘global solution’ to the entire 80-mile Superfund site,” said Novotny.

KRCC president Wager is also the president of the Oakwood Neighborhood Association in Kalamazoo. Novotny is a Kalamazoo-based architect. Jennifer Clark, a project director for Kalamazoo Communities in Schools, is the KRCC secretary. Michael Seals, a retired Consumers Energy employee and Parchment resident, will serve as KRCC treasurer.

Other KRCC board members include WMU Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies Sarah Hill, WMU Environmental Institute Director Charles Ide, and Allegan businessman Bill Wykhuis. Kalamazoo County Commissioner Jack Urban is a nonvoting ex officio board member.

More than 50 people from Kalamazoo and Allegan counties signed the original KRCC articles of incorporation. Additional board members and advisors will be added as identified.

“Active members from anywhere along the Superfund site are welcome as we shape our strategy for assuring a widely embraced, well-informed public position on the fate of the lower Kalamazoo River watershed,” said Novotny.

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